**Nile Basin Development Challenge**

**Nile 2: Integrated Rainwater Management Strategies: Technologies, Institutions and Policies**

**Innovation Platforms**

**Jeldu Field Trip Report**

**Purpose**: To check on the progresses of the IP pilot intervention at farmers field level and planning meeting with the local facilitators

**By** Aberra and Zelalem

**Date**: 25-27 October 2012

**Day 1: 25th October 2012**

We travelled from Nekmte and arrived at Ambo in the afternoon and visited Ambo University and met Ato Andinet who was one of the researchers for N2 baseline survey and who continue to participate in the IP meetings at Jeldu representing Ambo University. We briefed the plan to visit Jeldu and requested him, as being a member of TG, if he could join us to visit the pilot site on the next day. He said, he participated in the baseline survey research as a socio-economic professional and he has continued participating in the IP by personal understanding for representing the University. He suggested we should talk to Dr. Tesfaye who is the Director for Research, Technology and Knowledge Transfer at Ambo University and he is responsible for these kinds of partnership and he is the one to assign an appropriate professional contact person for the IP who will help the IP members technically and link the University’s work with the pilot. He mentioned that now the pilot work is interesting for Ambo University for networking with Holetta Agriculture Research Centre and ILRI as well as with the woreda stakeholders and the pilot site and the farmers group will be a focus area for the University where the department of livestock and natural resources can integrate their community outreach programs, researches and technology transfer. For this to happen, he said, ILRI should talk to the Director in person to make the partnership institutional. Then we decided and tried to meet the Director with Andinet but we couldn’t find him in office. So, we have received the address of Dr Tesfaye for further communication by phone for arranging someone who will participate on the coming field day and 5th IP meeting. We also feel that Ambo University like similar partners in Fogera and Diga, may need formal letter for official engagement in the IP and action research.

**Day 2: 26th October 2012**

**Visit to Jeldu:** The aim of the visit was to see the progress of the fodder intervention activities done at Melka watershed level of Kolu Gelan kebele and for planning of Field day and IP meetings.

**Participants**:

1. Temsegen Assefa from Hundee (Local Facilitator)
2. Tibebu Seifu from Livestock Agency (Contact Person)
3. Aberra Adie (ILRI)
4. Zelalem Lema (ILRI)

I and Aberra with Temesgen (Hundee) from Ginchi traveled to Jeldu in the morning and met Tibebu. We have briefed them the purpose of the visit though we communicated them on telephone in advance. We traveled to Koulu Gelan Kebele and Melka watershed where the pilot research is taking place and have visited three farmers who planted different fodder trees and grasses on the soil bund within their crops. We have also seen a backyard nursery type of fodder development and others planted on farm lands. According to information from the Focal Person, Temesgen, a total of 152, 332 different types fodder tree and grass seedlings have been distributed for 96 farmers from which the majority are those who have land on the upstream of the Melka Watershed and few of them from downstream. The seedlings were planted on an area of 2.15 hectare on backyard, 0.5 hectare on farmland and 9.57 km on soil bund/terraces. Among the forages planted on soil bunds, Desho grass (local Pennisetum sp) followed by bana grass are doing well despite the late planting. The farmers also planted tree Lucerne in association with the Desho grass on soil bunds though the spacings are not appropriate for trees like Tagasaste especially on crop land. Farmers and woreda experts were advised to improve the spacings during next season when rain commences.

We have seen the fodder grasses and trees planted and they are in a good condition. Having the same problem of late planting in all the three sites and early stop of rain challenges the progress but still there is a promising progress as farmers have also developed kind of nursery site around the river where they are using the water for irrigation.

We have seen farmers who have planted fodder trees and grasses on their farmland next to their houses and fenced to protect. The farmers are motivated since they have seen a model farmer who has a nursery site in his garden sold for more than 30,000 ETB for them to distribute for this pilot. So, in addition to the benefits they are expecting from the fodder development to solve their own shortage of fodder for livestock they are optimistic to sell the seedlings through government to other farmers in the woreda. We have visited also the watershed up to the river and we have seen how runoff is making a big gully by eroding soil and farm lands. We have visited also the model farmer and his nursery site for Desho grasses and others who sold for lots of money for this pilot. The woreda Livestock Agency head, Tibebu, also mentioned that the model farmer helped them to motivate other farmers. He will be also invited on the field day they are planning to organize soon so that other farmers will be motivated by his benefits from the nursery site he developed by his own.

We have then held a short meeting after lunch with Tibebu and Temesgen and discussed on their draft planning for organizing a field day and 5th IP meetings. We have agreed on the following plans for both activities.

**Field Day planned to be on 11th of November 2012**

We agreed that the field day should be done soon before the framers will get busy on harvesting and during the green condition of the fodders planted. Temesgen and Tibebu agreed that field days are most of the time held on Sunday in case of Jeldu.

The purpose of the field day is to create awareness among other farmers about the fodder pilot intervention activities going on with the group of farmers and encourage them to do the same for the next season. The communication will be done by the farmers on their own field to lead and explain the visit to other farmers coming from other areas and also IP members.

**Field Day Participants:**

* All IP members including farmers’ representatives, DAs and Kebele Chairman from all the five kebeles of the Meja watershed will participate
* A total of 96 farmers will participate on field day from the pilot project site (Kolu Gelan Kebele) who actually received the seedlings and who is trying on different lands of their own.

The IP members including Holetta Research Centre and Ambo University will participate on the field day to see how their joint planning was implemented and how the farmers are motivated for the expansion of the fodder development. This will give the IP members an input for their planning to consider and integrate their projects in the pilot site. The key IP members, Holeta RC, GIZ, Ambo University, Woreda OoA, and others role will be made clear to the farmers’ research group in providing technical backstopping on their intervention.

**5th IP meeting planned on the next day (12th November 2012)**

The main purpose of the 5th IP meeting is to revise the activities done so far on the pilot by the TG members and also to build on the discussion from the Field Day with farmers. Each IP members roles and responsibilities will be identified for further development of the same farmers group in helping them develop the fodder and buying them for other farmers to motivate them develop more fodder. The main discussion area will also be on how to align the fodder development with the current government campaign on soil and water conservation and how best this pilot could help in filling the gaps as the government is also planning for developing a lot of nursery sites for multiplication of agroforestry trees and others.

We agreed that the IP meeting will mainly be organized by the TG mainly by local facilitator and contact person so the letter will also be prepared and distributed to IP members from the woreda office of agriculture.

ILRI will participate on the field day and back stop IP meeting and also early communicate the GIZ, Holeta RC and Ambo University by sending them an official letter not only to participate but also to assign an appropriate staff as a focal person for the IP for future continuous engagement and support representing their organization. Farmers’ representatives from the target group of the action research will also participate in the IP meeting.

Finally Temesgen submitted a narrative report of hard copy and financial utilization of the IP and there is enough budgets allocated for the Field day. Preparation has already started and Temesgen is locally facilitating the budget and the activities with Tibebu.

We were not able to find the DA who was assigned as a champion for M&E and documenting pictures of the pilot process since Friday (26 November 2012) was Holiday.